



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Water**

## Disability access and inclusion plan 2014–2018

January 2015

*Securing Western Australia's water future*



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Department of Water

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# Purpose and functions of the Department of Water

While domestic water occupies most people's attention, the reality is that around 80 per cent of the state's licensed water is used for irrigated agriculture and horticulture, businesses, mining, services, local government and parks.

Good management of Western Australia's water is fundamental to the state's prosperity.

The Department of Water supports Western Australia's growth and development by managing water for sustainable, productive use.

In our variable climate, it's a big challenge to find water sources that support population growth and state development, meet environmental needs and balance economic, community and cultural benefits.

To meet this challenge we:

- lead policy development for the best use of the state's water and to provide water services
- assess and advise on how much water is available for use and the options to meet demand
- encourage water conservation and promote clever use of alternative water sources
- manage and make rules for the use of water
- integrate water planning and land use planning
- protect and improve water resources
- work with industry, government and the community to find solutions for better water use.

## Our values

In fulfilling these functions we are guided by the following values:

**Lead** - we raise the bar for excellence in water resource management.

**Respond** - we work together in a proactive, adaptable and responsible manner to deliver timely water solutions.

**Innovate** - we make smart use of water by thinking differently.

**Commit** - we are dedicated to achieving the best results for our stakeholders and water resources.

# Planning for better access and inclusion

## People with disability in Western Australia

The 2012 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics estimated that 16 per cent of the population of Western Australia has a disability.

Carers WA estimates 310 000 Western Australians provide unpaid care and support to a family member or friend who requires help due to illness or disability.

## Our commitment to access and inclusion

Through its *Disability access and inclusion plan* (DAIP) the Department of Water expresses its commitment to people with disability, their families and carers.

The department is committed to:

- ensuring people with disability, their families and carers are able to fully access the department's information, services and facilities (both in-house and contracted), providing them the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities that other people in the community enjoy
- consulting with people with disability, their families and carers and disability organisations to ensure that barriers to access and inclusion are appropriately addressed.

The department will ensure that people with disability can:

- access the services of, and any events organised by the department
- access the buildings and other facilities of the department
- receive information from the department in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people
- receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the department as other people
- make complaints to the department
- participate in any public consultation by the department
- obtain and maintain employment with the department.



## Development of the 2014–2018 Disability access and inclusion plan

As part of the consultation process, feedback was sought on the draft DAIP within the department from Corporate Executive and staff, and externally from the Disability Services Commission, disability organisations and the public via advertising placed in *The West Australian* newspaper and on the department's website.

## Monitoring and reporting

The Disability Access Committee is responsible for implementing and reviewing the department's DAIP, and monitoring the plan through the department's annual report and annual progress reports to the Disability Services Commission. The DAIP will be reviewed at least every five years, in accordance with the minimum review requirements set out in the *Disability Services Act 1993*.

It is a requirement of the *Disability Services Act 1993* that public authorities take all practical measures to ensure that the DAIP is implemented by all staff, agents and contractors.

The department will report annually to the Disability Services Commission on progress in implementing strategies, progress made by agents and contractors and strategies used to inform agents and contractors of the department's DAIP.

## Our previous disability access and inclusion plans

The following achievements have been made under previous plans.

- The Disability Access Committee was established to guide the implementation of the DAIP.
- Publication policies were reviewed and universal design principles for information incorporated.
- All new publications include the National Relay Service number and promote the availability of information and services in alternative formats.
- Forms and applications are also available electronically and in other formats on request.
- The department's website was redeveloped and complies with current requirements for public sector agencies in regard to access for people with disability. New material for the website is reviewed for accessibility.
- The complaints management system was reviewed for accessibility for people with disability, and training provided to relevant staff.
- Accessibility requirements under State and Commonwealth legislation are provided for in the design of new facilities. For example, in 2009 the Kwinana-Peel regional office relocated to the Marine Operations Centre, incorporating the highest standards of disability access, including provision of accessible parking.
- Access audits were conducted on the department's metropolitan and regional offices. Improvements to physical access, such as parking, were made where these audits identified a need.

## Strategies to improve access and inclusion 2014–2018

The department is committed to developing and implementing strategies to improve access and inclusion. The following strategies are designed to guide the improvement of access to the department's services and facilities, information and employment from 2014 to 2018.

**Outcome 1: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, the Department of Water.**

*Ensure that all employees and contractors are aware of their responsibilities under the DAIP.*

- The DAIP is placed on department's internet and intranet.
- Employees are informed of the plan via internal newsletters and emails.
- New employees are informed of the plan at induction.
- All managers are made aware of the plan.
- Employees with direct responsibilities in the plan are aware and accountable.
- The objectives of the DAIP are considered in the department's workforce and diversity plan.

*Ensure that events are organised so that they are as accessible as possible to people with disability.*

- Ensure all events are planned using the accessible events checklist.
  - Make the accessible events checklist available on the department's intranet.
  - Provide opportunities for people with disability to comment on access to events organised by the department.

**Outcome 2: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the Department of Water.**

*Ensure that, where possible, all departmental buildings and facilities are physically accessible to people with disability.*

- Ensure all planning for the leasing of premises by the department takes into account the needs of people with disability and complies with the Disability (access to premises – buildings) Standards 2010.
- Audit department buildings for accessibility to people with disability.
  - Ensure, where possible, that there is adequate parking to meet the needs of visitors with disability.

- Ensure the department’s reception, client contact areas and facilities are accessible to people with disability.
- Ensure work, utilities and recreational areas are accessible to employees with disability.
- Ensure signage meets the needs of people with disability.
- Facilitate feedback about access from employees and visitors with disability.
  - Ensure this feedback is acted on in a timely manner.

*Ensure that the department’s occupational health and safety (OSH) procedures meet the needs of people with disability.*

- Ensure OSH procedures are in place to ensure the safety of employees and visitors with disability.
- Review emergency evacuation procedures for all department buildings to ensure they address the needs of people with disability.
- Ensure fire wardens are trained in evacuation procedures for people with disability.

**Outcome 3: People with disability receive information from the Department of Water in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people.**

*Ensure the provision of information for all people with disability complies with the State Government access guidelines for information, services and facilities.*

- Ensure that, on request, all department publications are able to be provided in alternative formats in a timely manner.
- Ensure publications are written in plain English and able to be translated on request in a timely manner.
- Where needed, provide the use of interpreters to improve the availability of services/ information to people with hearing impairment.
- Improve staff and community awareness that information is available in alternative formats, upon request.
  - Improve staff awareness, via internal news letters and emails, of accessible information needs and how to obtain information in other formats.
  - Inform the community via publications and the department’s website that information can be provided in alternative formats.

*Ensure any redevelopment of the department’s website increases accessibility for people with disability.*

- Review the department’s website to ensure compliance with the state government website accessibility policy.

- Ensure the department's website continues to meet contemporary best practice and applicable legislative requirements for access for people with disability.

**Outcome 4: People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the Department of Water as other people.**

*Ensure all employees have the knowledge and skills to provide quality services for people with disability, their families and carers.*

- Improve staff awareness of disability and access issues.
  - Maintain and promote policies, codes of conduct and strategies that prohibit discrimination, harassment and victimisation of people with disability.
  - Provide regular information on access and inclusion in internal news and emails.
  - Promote to staff the availability of resources such as the Disability Services Commission's Access and inclusion resource kit.
- Inform employees of their role in implementing and monitoring the DAIP to ensure its success.
- Ensure employees who have direct responsibilities under the DAIP are aware and accountable.
- Ensure employees who have direct contact with the public and community stakeholders undertake relevant training.
- Examine specific disability awareness training needs of relevant staff and include in work and development plans as appropriate.
- Ensure agents or contractors providing services to the public on behalf of the department work towards the desired access and inclusion outcomes of the department's DAIP.
  - Inform agents and contractors of their responsibilities under the DAIP as required.

**Outcome 5: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Department of Water.**

*Ensure that Department of Water complaints management systems are accessible for people with disability.*

- Review current mechanisms for complaints handling and revise where necessary.
- Ensure complaints procedures are available in alternative and accessible formats.

*Ensure that the department's employees have the knowledge to facilitate the receipt of complaints from people with disability.*

- Monitor and address complaints received from employees and members of the community about disability access.
- Include information on complaints management and accessibility in department induction.
- Ensure employees who have direct contact with the public and community stakeholders undertake relevant training related to complaints management.

**Outcome 6: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the Department of Water**

*Ensure consultations with the public are conducted in an accessible manner and are inclusive of people with disability*

- Review the department's community consultation processes. Update policy and guidelines with a view to encouraging participation by ensuring the needs of people with different communication needs are met by consultation strategies.
- Provide sufficient notice of meetings and an appropriate level of support to people with disability who are directly involved in any consultation process.
- Ensure that people with disability and representative stakeholder organisations are encouraged to participate in the department's public consultation processes.

*Ensure information relating to consultation processes is available in accessible formats for people with disability, their families and carers.*

**Outcome 7: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with the Department of Water**

*Develop strategies to provide an inclusive and supportive environment which removes barriers to attracting and retaining employees with disability.*

- Promote the department as an equal opportunity employer.
- Ensure the process and method of applying for recruitment opportunities is accessible to people with disability.
- Review job descriptions and recruitment advertisements to ensure:
  - inclusive and non-discriminatory language is used
  - selection criteria and job descriptions do not disadvantage people with disability.
- Ensure that internal policies prohibit discrimination and harassment.
- Support employees with disability through job design, flexible working arrangements and appropriate resources.

- Include disability awareness in recruitment and selection training for panel members and managers.
- Ensure data collection methods accurately capture information related to the employment of people with disability.
  - Encourage employees with a disability to disclose information in workforce data reporting processes.





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